And Now Greenwich Village Becomes Plain New York

The Seventh Avenue Extension's Invasion of Bohemia

GREENWICH VILLAGE has been rent (unhappy word!) and torn by the opening to traffic of the Seventh Avenue extension, the first direct thoroughfare to penetrate this residential backwater longitudinally. A subway kiosk has sprouted in Sheridan Square and rents are climbing.

Italian tenement dwellers and garret infesting Bohemians—to escape high rents—have started on a hægira that may not stop this side of West Hoboken. Already Tiny Tim, who used to sell soul candies in a volunteer fireman makeup, has gone to New Jersey. But Tim and his wife have made their pile and own a home and everything. Their case is not symptomatic; merely interesting.

The artistic ones chortled too loudly from their Washington Square garrets and hall bedrooms about the simplicity of existence in the vicinity of the furtherest south end of the Fifth Avenue 'bus line. A swarm of creatures who held jobs began to besiege the real estate office of Vincent Pepe, in Washington Square South. Then rents began to mount and houses were remodelled. In a word, Washington Square became fashionable, or almost fashionable. Right this very minute E. H. Sothern and his wife, Julia Marlowe, are seeking a permanent home on the Square.

Then those free wild villagers began to emigrate. Those first ones who crossed Sixth Avenue and settled in Sheridan Square were a bold lot indeed. But were they so bold as will be the intrepid explorers who first reach Abingdon Square, where their ideas on anything from the influence of artichokes on art to eroticism in literature may be expounded from what is now a drab and dust covered public bandstand?

"Polly's," with its bare board tables and benches along its green basement walls, regular food and a cost system and the Greenwich Village Theatre came and justified their being. But around them sprouted and flourished patches of weird tea rooms, some of which were amusing and others just plain silly.

Don Dickerman's Pirate Den, across the square from Polly's, was prospering in a dark, dank basement. The upper floors were occupied by an assortment of queer places calculated to open the purses of jaded thrill chasers from Waterloo, Iowa, and Washington Heights. All about were Signs of the Vermilion Hound, and Pink Parrots, even to one bromide place called The Camouflage.

Those Unreasonable Police

Then came the police with perfectly unreasonable commands and closed many of these places. A fat bluecoat who thought class consciousness meant prohibition was placed in front of Don Dickerman's and barred out patrons with real money to spend for ginger ale at 40 cents a glass and nothing extra for atmosphere

But all that is old stuff. There is no policeman in front of Don Dickerman's Pirate Den now. The doors are falling in. Some wag with a first-hand knowledge of cooties, doubtless, has painted on the face of the adjoining vacant buildings; "Blue Ointment Terrace."

But there is a far more weighty reason for the unoccupied state of the cubicles above the Pirate Den than any policeman, however fat. The reason is an economic one. An architect, who realizes that Greenwich Village is undergoing metamorphosis, has taken a long lease on the crumbling building. He is planning to remodel it into modern, and therefore high priced, apartments. And why not? The future occupants will be less than ten minutes by the tube from Wall Street, and about the same distance measured by the clock from Times Square.

Miss E. B. Dunlap, who may have settled in the Village because of artistic hopes, or possibly they were literary aspirations, but who has remained as a real estate dealer in the firm of Dunlap & Lloyd, says the tea rooms have gone for good. Her office is on Sheridan Square, facing that tiny triangular plot of iron-fenced grass that is known to the Park Department as Christopher Street Park.

"I have three people on my lists now who are looking for places in which to open tea rooms," said Miss Dunlap. "I have nothing to offer them, and I shan't have. Rents are prohibitive for those places. The only reason so many of them have hung on is the absurdly low rents that have been charged for the queer places they occupied. Now they are beginning to go. Where do they go from here?"

Then Miss Dunlap said something about "Harlem to the Jersey City Pier," but became more explicit and fixed a dead line along Seventh Avenue. "Most of the old ones who wish to stay or the new ones will settle on the western side of Seventh Avenue."

The New Bohemia

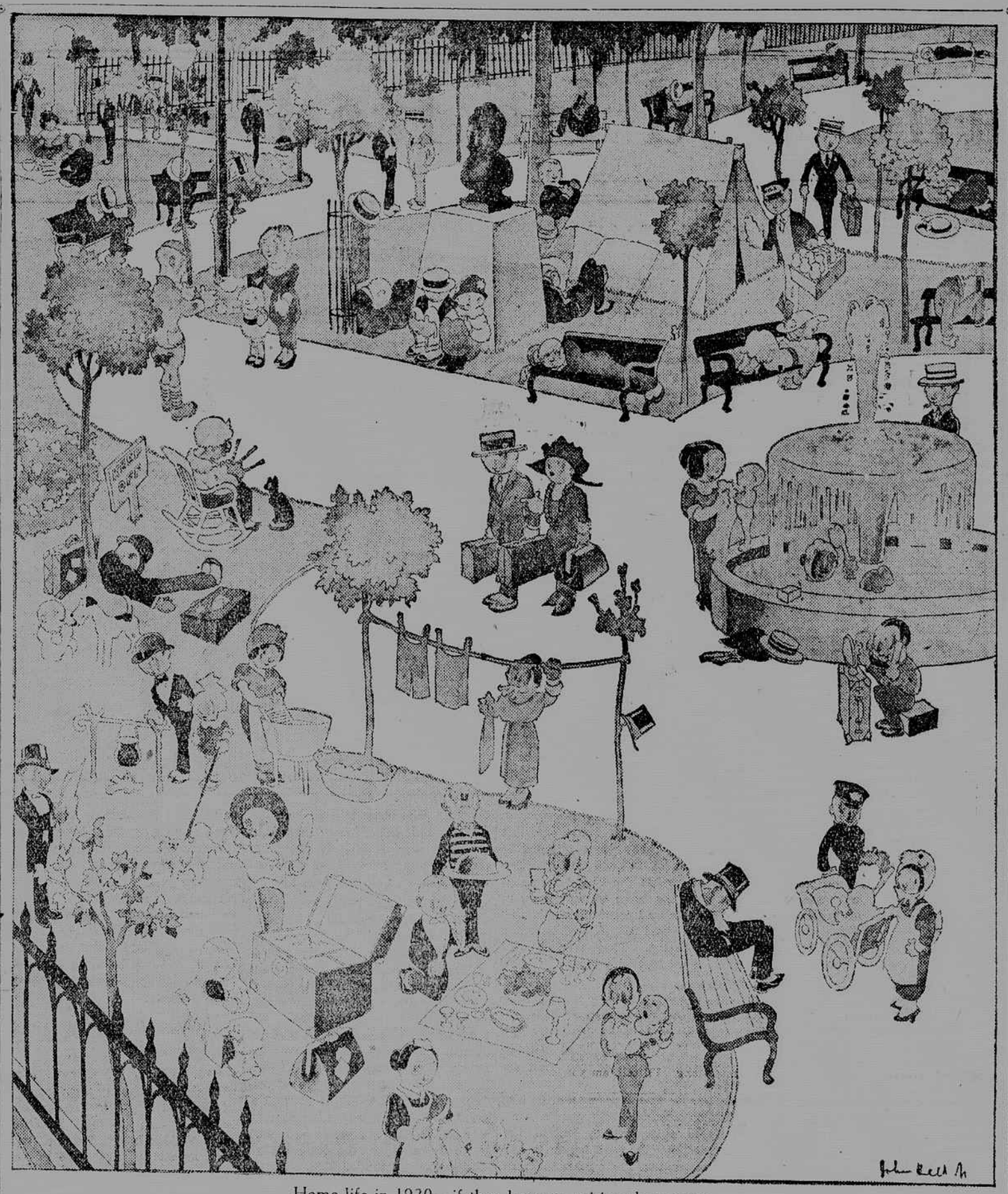
Already a number have sprouted up in the block bounded by Grove, Bleecker, Barrow and Bedford streets. That is the nucleus of the new Bohemia. There are plenty of garrets in that region. The houses are old, and bathrooms—the higher the fewer. But that region also is scheduled for renovation, if the renting agents are to be believed.

In New York "Italian quarter" has always been a connotative term for cheap rents, and Washington Square to the Italians of New York is just as much Garibaldi Square. The Italians no less than the Bohemians are being dispossessed from the promising sites in the village.

Twenty Italian families have been ordered out of the tenement house at the corner of Jones and Fourth streets, two blocks east of the new Seventh Avenue cheap rent dead line. Most of them have found quarters west of Seventh Avenue. The vacant tenement is to be remodelled. When the transformation is complete and two bathrooms have been made to grow where none grew before, when there is an open fireplace and white tiling and gas ranges and expensive iceboxes have blossomed in the drab kitchens of the former occupants, the owner can say to himself, "pretty soft." Then, instead of $5 and $6 a room he can demand—and get—$15 and $25 a room, and the tenement house inspector can scratch the building off his list.

On the south side of Grove Street, just East of Seventh Avenue, the Italian tenement dwellers have been ordered to move. They have been paying $30 to $40 a month. The owner has discovered or realized that his property can be converted into what the real estate men know as "high class studio apartments." These are to rent for $75 to $100 a month. The owner calls it a good investment and most likely the people who occupy these studio apartments will pay their rent more cheerfully than they ever did in any uptown long hall apartment with dark bedrooms.

Business men are not overlooking the village, either. The Corn Exchange Bank is establishing a branch at Grove and Fourth streets, facing Seventh Avenue. The rear of the lot on which its building is being erected extended beyond the business zone that extends 100 feet each way from the centre of Seventh Avenue through the village. The bank had to gain permission from every property owner in the block before it could extend its building a few feet beyond that 100-foot line. They gained the boon they sought, but the men who persuaded the villagers' to put the permission in writing will tell the metropolitan district and the world that there is small chance of business encroaching on the residential portions of the village.



Home life in 1920—if they keep on raising those rents

The Rents' Dramatic Rise and the Tea Rooms' Fall

Saloons' Substitutes

Seventh Avenue is quite another matter, and the avidity with which vacant saloon corners are being gobbled up along Seventh Avenue from Tenth Street to Times Square is a fair indication of the future of that newest Broadway.

Vincent Pepe, from his office in 40 Washington Square South, just a few paces from what a hundred years ago was the public hanging place, watched the village pass through the evolution that transformed this once fashionable section into a down-at-heel region of decay.

Then he saw the beginning of the Seventh Avenue extension, and city engineers, like surgeons, cutting away diseased tissues in the heart of the village. Some venerable structures were razed in the process, but when this work that began October 21, 1918, was completed only a few weeks ago, there was a wide thoroughfare stretching without interruption from the warehouse district of Franklin Street to the southern border of Central Park. Through tenements, houses, even churches, the extension was pushed until the street was outlined like a huge scar, its edges marked by the raw projections of buildings of which only portions had been razed. The lines marked out by the surveyors were followed through a labyrinthian maze of streets that ran obliquely in the path of the new thoroughfare. Eleventh Street, Perry, Charles, then West Tenth, Christopher, Grove, Barrow, Morton were crossed at an angle until finally at Clarkson Street Seventh Avenue was joined with Varick Street, forming a new union between uptown New York and downtown.

Speaking of the period of decline in the village Vincent Pepe said:

"For a period of about fifteen years, or until quite recently, the Washington Square and Greenwich Village districts had been declining. This tendency started when the business section from Houston Street to Fourteenth Street, west of Mercer Street, was going gradually west and the erection of many loft buildings was changing the tone of the neighborhood.

Panic of Owners

"These loft buildings got as far as West Broadway in the village and as far as Washington Square East. Then the property owners became alarmed and began to give up hope of trying to preserve the section. Many owners left their private residences to move uptown, usually into a Riverside Drive apartment.

"When the houses were vacated occupants could not be found to use them as private residences. Consequently they were rented to persons who wanted them for shops or as furnished room houses. That caused the property to decline in value. Conditions went from bad to worse. Finally the property value level had dropped 30 to 40 per cent.

"When the estate of the late General Butterfield was sold at auction one of his houses, for example, was sold for $17,300. This was assessed at $24,000. This was a four-story and basement brick house on a lot 25x100 feet.

"Five years prior to the auction this same house had been on our books for sale at $24,000. Five other houses on the south side of West Twelfth street of similar dimensions were sold for $16,500 each. Every one of them at these figures went at about 25 per cent less than the assessed value and 38 per cent less than the original value.

"A change for the better began when the People's Institute appointed a secretary for Greenwich Village activities. I was informed that their work was being financed by some of the department stores, which feared to see the district destroyed as a residential quarter. This would have compelled the department stores to move also.

"Mr. Benedict asked me to aid. Finally we issued a little booklet describing places of interest in the village. It was illustrated and contained pictures of the Colonial houses. The booklet was entitled 'How Would You Like to Open One of These Doors in Greenwich Village?'

"This booklet arpused interest among homeseekers, but usually one look at the unimproved interiors of the houses discouraged them, no matter how keen they were about the picturesque qualities of the places shown them.

"One day in Gramercy Park I noticed a very attractive remodelled house. I made up my mind that the Washington Square section was adaptable for that sort of improvement.

"After several preliminary experiments which were successful I took over a house at 124 Waverley Place. This was dilapidated and had been rented as a rooming house at $1,000 a year. By spending about $7,000 I increased the rental from $1,000 to $4,700 a year. There is another house in Washington Square that for a time was renting for $1,400 a year. By spending $15,000 the owner has increased the rental to $8,000 a year.

Built of shabby red brick, with shutters hanging by one hinge, with ancient, ill-tempered plumbing, there was little to attract tenants to the unimproved houses. But painters and plumbers and bricklayers worked magic. The way those changes are made is another story, but the fact that they are made is one of the reasons that the Greenwich Village of poets in garrets and peasants (Italian) in tenements is disappearing. The Seventh Avenue extension is the other reason.

Anderson—the Man Who Beat John Barleycorn

WILLIAM H. ANDERSON, State Superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League, in the five years and five months that he has been fighting the liquor interests in the Empire State has so successfully and relentlessly battled with the "wets" that his name is as familiar to the reader of newspapers as that of the Governor, or either of the United States Senators, or the leading movie actor, or the highest paid ballplayer.

The liquor men at one and the same time detest and fear him. He never has asked for quarter from them. Year after year he has taken a drubbing, and year after year he came back for more—until 1919, when he swapped places with the hosts of John Barleycorn. Now he fights the "wets" from the inside of the breastworks. The "wets" are on the outside.

He had scarcely got started in his [illegible] in this state before he stood the [illegible]men on their heads, figuratively speaking, by having introduced at Albany a bill requiring that all packages containing alcoholic liquor for beverage purposes with 2 per cent or more of alcoholic content should be labelled with a skull and crossbones and the scientific statement: "This preparation contains alcohol, which is a habit-forming, irritant, narcotic poison."

The bill did not become a law. Anderson did not expect that it would. What he wanted was advertising, and he got it. The liquor men raved about "that roughneck, Anderson," and by the time they were done the tall Westerner was one of the best advertised temperance agitators in the United States.

Fought All The Way

From that time until the present hour Anderson has demonstrated a propensity for slam-bang, two-handed fighting that has kept his opponents nervous. He is on top to-day because he fought his way to the top, like a heavyweight prizefighter.

"Anything but a dull time. If there is nothing doing, start something!" is one of his mottoes, lived up to.

"What is the explanation of your picturesque vocabulary and your use of slang?" asked a Tribune representative.

"There is not any," said Anderson. "I do not intend to use slang.

Prohibitionist At Ten

"All I want is to say things so they 'get across.' The only purpose I have is to pack the most meaning into the smallest compass, so that it will stick, and also so that the average man will not need an interpreter or a dictionary in order to understand it. I do try to behave myself, for I have been solemnly admonished by some good brethren of the highbrow sort, who thought I was talking below the dignity of a great reform movement. Now, I do not object to dignity provided it does not get in the way, but results are the acid test of any policy. I would rather have a lop-eared, splay-footed, flea-bitten mule and a dump cart that would deliver the goods than a pneumatic tired benzine buggy that would cough and die on the first hill. I never had much time to use language for the purpose of concealing thought."

William Hamilton Anderson was born in the village of Carlinville, Ill., on August 8, 1874, of Scotch-Irish ancestry. His father is a country lawyer, with a love for the soil and politics. His Methodist mother raised her boy a teetotaler, and he became a radical prohibitionist at the age of ten when he read in the public school about the effect of alcohol upon the human system. The local Women's Christian Temperance Union in Carlinville offered prizes for the best essay and the best examination on the textbooks used in the school, and Anderson won all the prizes in sight. After finishing the public school course Anderson went to Blackburn College, in the same village. Later he graduated in law at Ann Arbor, Mich.

As president of the Epworth League of the Springfield district of the Methodist Church the young lawyer went to a state convention of Epworthians and heard Howard H. Russell, founder of the Anti-Saloon League, give the first exposition of the league, then a new thing in Illinois. Dr. Russell quoted an Ohio farmer on the successful work of the newly organized league in the Buckeye State, who said: "If this thing keeps going it will knock hell out of politics."

The idea stuck in the mind of the young lawyer, and soon thereafter he made up his mind to make temperance reform his lifework. First, he was state superintendent of the Illinois league. He drafted and built the organization that passed the Illinois local option law, under which between 900 and 1,000 townships voted dry in a single day.

Then he went to Maryland as state superintendent, after serving a year in a subordinate capacity in this state. After superintending the league work in Maryland for seven years Anderson on January 1, 1914, came to New York with a programme and a policy fully outlined.

On the War Path

William Barnes, the Republican leader, didn't like the statement fathered by Anderson that Barnes was "the boss of the liquor end of the Republican party of the state" and sued Anderson. A new stenographer in Anderson's office put the obnoxious appellation after Mr. Barnes's name on the outside of an envelope and the envelope promptly found its way to Mr. Barnes's office in Albany. Nothing came of the suit, because the postal law says that no one shall "knowingly" address a letter like that. The case was lost sight of in Mr. Barnes's suit against Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

William H. Anderson, state superintendent of the New York Anti-Saloon League

Next Mr. Anderson took the trail after Speaker Sweet, whose composition of the Assembly Excise Committee from year to year was such that a dry bill could not get out of committee. Anderson carried the war against the Speaker to Oswego County, the home of Mr. Sweet. Thereafter the Assembly Committee on Excise found a way to report out dry bills. This year Speaker Sweet lent a hand in putting ratification through the Legislature.

When The Tribune representative one day last week called on Mr. Anderson at his office on the sixteenth floor of 906 Broadway he found that individual, who is about 6 feet 2 inches tall and well proportioned, busy as a beaver dictating correspondence.

"What is the Anderson code?" asked the scribe.

"A moral idea is the mightiest thing beneath the throne of God," said Mr. Anderson. "The right will prevail if it has a fighting chance and you give it time enough. The liquor business had to go because it always was wrong."

"And what were some of the things that kept you going?"

"An intense conviction of having been divinely called into this particular work, and that no minister in ordinary pulpit work has a higher call," said the rum fighter. "A faith based upon this conviction that when a thing is right it is bound to win in the long run, and that the only question at all involved is whether the human instrument has 'sand' enough to take punishment until his time comes, and then whether he has sense enough not to get spoiled by success.

"An institution that is wrong is bound to be foolish because sin itself is foolish, and the forces of evil can always be depended upon to come to bat with a bonehead play at the critical moment.

"When an institution is wrong, like the liquor traffic, anything it does is a mistake.

"I believe in a policy of deliberately prodding the opposition into making a fool of itself and then taking advantage of what it does; a policy of preparedness, the maintenance of a private war college, with skeleton campaigns for every contingency.

"I recognize the inherent wisdom in the philosophy of the village halfwit who, when a valuable horse was lost and a reward was offered, found the horse, and, being interrogated as to how he did it said: 'I thinks to myself what would I do was I a horse and I did.'

"I believe in a policy of recognizing that the other fellow has a limit and of staying until his limit is reached. A policy of having no limit whatever that one is not willing to go inside the law. A policy of no hunting for trouble but never running from any.

"I believe in applying to politics the Biblical proposition against putting new wine in old bottles, namely a recognition that the old political methods of manipulation and barter are not applicable to a moral movement; a policy of planting a movement upon fundamental moral principles and refusing utterly to make any sort of compromise.

"I long ago recognized the fact that a movement that depends upon public sentiment is essentially a publicity proposition.

"I believe a reform agency should have a sense of news values and some faculty for thinking up and pulling off stunts that are news.

"I believe that while the politicians have to win because they need the loaves and fishes, a moral movement does not have to win any particular fight. All a moral movement has to do is to show intelligent aggression in the right direction.

"There is an advantage in having a constituency that is used to being whipped and that understands the philosophy of losing battles in order to win wars.

"Finally, I believe in a policy of never being caught out with a fork when it is raining soup."

The Diffident Young Man

By Harry Godfrey

"DO YOU ever," the hotel clerk asked, "print an article without using names?"

"That depends," the Diffident Young Man replied. "What's the story?"

"If you've got to use the name there's no story. If you'll keep the name out—see here. There's a certain kind of thing happens every day. When it gets into the papers most always they give the name of the girl—only the girl. Understand?"

"Of course. But that's 'old stuff.' Unless there's a new feature to it—something unusual"——

The clerk's eyes were flashing.

"There isn't any new feature, and it isn't unusual, and it is 'old stuff,'" he interrupted, "and that's why you ought to print it, and write in your story that it isn't unusual. Maybe that would help make it unusual."

He took a packet of letters from his pocket.

"These," he said, "lured a girl from upstate to New York. She went back home this morning with her father. She forgot these—they were under her pillow. Do you know what I'm going to do with them?"

The Diffident Young Man didn't.

"Well, I'm going to show them to my girl—my daughter. She's just the age of the girl they were written to. Now do you understand?"

He handed the letters over.

They were "old stuff." Crowded with avowals of love, subtle flatteries and flatteries not so subtle. Just one thing was not in them. The one thing the girl took for granted, the one thing the man didn't propose: marriage.

"Well," said the clerk, "now do you want the name?"

"Yes—the name signed to the letters."

"I guess you didn't notice," said the clerk wearily, "the letters aren't signed. That kind never [illegible]